



The Amesbury Beat

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Nearly everyone works with numbers and data on a daily basis, including police agencies. Police agencies spend a lot of time on crime and traffic analysis; seeking to identify trends, dangerous locations and areas where added services are needed. Of course, numbers can be interpreted differently and sometimes don't really tell an entire story but we can only use what we have. In fact, low crime statistics can easily make a community complacent because most residents are generally not exposed to crimes.

We live in a very safe part of the Commonwealth and in fact, Country; I have stated that many times over the years as crime prevention officer. I am often asked if times are worse now than in the past; honestly, I am sure many readers wonder where our society is headed. There are a couple statistics, which are tough to measure but are crucial to community policing in any city or town; crime prevention and the fear of crime. We can never know how many crimes we prevent, either by a simple patrol, a safety tip or with information distributed at a program but it's a crucial part of our job.

Police departments must also work diligently to reduce the fear of crime; we cannot have a community where people live in fear. We take several steps to reduce fear; visibility of officers, extra patrols, providing information to clarify a situation and establishing strong community partnerships. There are challenges in reducing the fear of crime, however; people expect immediate information, social networking is a prime source for misinformation and resources are often limited. When an incident is happening, we don't have the time to answer every question or respond to every concern. There are also times when we cannot provide the information because the matter is sensitive or there are privacy considerations.

Maintaining the safety and welfare of residents is the primary focus of every police department so we will let you know if you must take a course of action. Sometimes residents will need to be patient as well, which is also challenging. Seeing officers actively processing a scene, using a K9 to search for a suspect or hearing a helicopter above are excitable experiences; we understand and agree but most of the time, the matter is under control. Police officers are well trained, supervised and experienced; these factors play an important role in assuring a community is a safe place. Please do not be afraid of your community, just be aware that in today's world that sometimes bad things can happen and you've got to remember your personal safety tips.



This week I travel back to the year, 2016, when we saw the demolition of the Whittier Bridge, reconstruction of the 495 over pass above the Riverwalk and the opening of the Jardis-Taylor Center on Main Street, the new home of Our Neighbor's Table. I was humbled to have been honored by the Amesbury Educational Foundation, being inducted into their Hall of Honor as I celebrated my 20th year as Crime Prevention Officer. The biggest community event of the year was certainly the return of the Fireball Run, as the Chamber of Commerce brought the reality show finish line to the City.

It took over a year to prepare, brought the community together and was a really cool event, despite the heavy rain participants encountered as they crossed the finish line on October 1st. Mayor Gray and Charlie Cullen represented the City in the Run, which began in upstate New York a week earlier. Students followed the trip, we organized a safety fair and even built a new hotel, The Hampton Inn to accommodate the racers. Residents lined the streets as they arrived, marveling at the unique vehicles, driven by fireballers from across the Country. I even connected with Paul "Doc" Nigh who helped us collect donations for the Relay For Life with his custom DeLorean, straight out of the "Back to the Future" set. Although the Fireball Run was a combination of trivial pursuit and the Amazing Race, the true mission was to locate missing children. Each team brought awareness of a missing child from their hometown area, distributing fliers and cards along the route in hopes of locating a missing child. In 11 seasons of the Fireball Run, 55 children have been located, including at least 3 from the 2016 campaign. It was an exciting time and a great example of community policing.

